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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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NATIONAL GUARDSMAN SENTENCED IN MACHINE GUN CASE

BALTIMORE, Maryland - Thomas M. DiBiagio, United States Attorney for the District of Maryland, announced that Billie Ray Womble, age 44, of Essex, Maryland was sentenced today by U.S. District Judge William D. Quarles, Jr. to serve 53 months in prison followed by 2 years of supervised release for possession and transfer of machine guns.

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, the Baltimore County Police Department and the Baltimore City Police Department investigated the illegal sales of machine guns occurring in Baltimore County and Baltimore City which revealed that Womble sold 10 machine guns. Search warrants were executed at Womble's residence and place of employment from which 3 machine guns, 4 AK-47 rifles, various firearms and numerous items of stolen military property were recovered. At various times, Womble possessed more than 25 firearms and machine guns stolen from the Maryland Army National Guard which were on loan from the United States Army. Womble was a member of Maryland Army National Guard at the time of the offenses.

According to statements made to the court by Womble's attorney, Womble faces a potential court martial and will be discharged from the National Guard.

This case was investigated by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, the Baltimore County Police Department and the Baltimore City Police Department and was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Christopher J. Romano and Jane M. Erisman.